

The Brethren Evangelist,

ASHLAND, OHIO.

A. D. GNAGEY, : : Editor.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1895.

TO OUR READERS.

We take it for granted that you are personally interested in the success of the Publishing House of the Brethren church, and on the strength of this confidence, we ask your earnest and careful consideration of the words herein addressed to you. The Brethren church now publishes the following periodicals.

1. The BRETHREN EVANGELIST, weekly.
2. Cheering Words, for S. S., "
3. Our Little Folks, "
4. King's Children, monthly.
5. Brethren Quarterly, quarterly.
6. Youth's Quarterly, "

Six periodicals, *three* weeklies, *one* monthly, and *two* quarterlies. The cost of the paper for these publications, setting up the type, press work, folding, making up, mailing and postage, amounts to about *sixty dollars* a week, not including editor's salary and clerk hire. And these *sixty dollars must be paid CASH EACH WEEK.* The paper must be paid, the fuel, the pressmen, the compositors, the postage—*these can not be put off.* Some one is now ready to say, "Just as I expected, the same old story, a bankrupt Publishing House." But in this you are mistaken. We have not uttered a word of complaint. We have not asked for *one cent donation*, and we do not expect to. What then do you mean by the above statement? some one says.

Let us explain. There is enough due this office from subscribers, and from Sunday-schools, which if paid, would enable us to carry on the work without any *financial embarrassment* whatever. Considering the "hard times," the publishing enterprise has made a good record. We do not ask for a *donation*, but we *do* ask you to exempt us from donating too much to the brotherhood. We have, this week, sent out bills to all who are indebted to us. Kindly remit at your earliest convenience. Perhaps you say, "I owe but \$1.50 or 75 cents. It cannot matter much whether I pay or not." But these *smaller amounts* make up the sum total of the EVANGELIST money. Besides, if the amount is so small, it should be all the

better for you. To you, it means \$1.00; to us it means *four or five hundred dollars.* It is certainly much easier for you to *borrow* the very small amount, than for the Publishing House, to borrow several hundred dollars, and pay a *high* interest. Kindly consider the matter, and if at all possible, *favor* us with a remittance at once. We do not wish to be too urgent, but it is necessary that these collections are made to carry on the work. Bills to Sunday-schools were sent out some time ago. Should there be an error in your account, we will gladly make correction. Now consider well, brethren, and respond to our call. Let there be no occasion for another appeal like this. We include in it, subscribers and Sunday-schools.

THE RELATION OF CHURCH TO CHURCHES.

There is much said and written about the relation our Young People's Societies and the Sunday-school sustain to the church, but very little is said or written concerning the relation of the local church to churches. One may well ask the question, Does such a relation exist? Does the local church or congregation bear any relation to the churches at large? If so, what is that relation? To what extent is the local church responsible for the work of all the churches, or organizations in the brotherhood? How are they related? Or is the local church an independent organization, bearing no relation whatever to other churches and organizations?

With a purely congregational form of government, such as is claimed by the Brethren, there is danger of shifting a responsibility from the local church which is not intended, and which the scriptural idea of such a church does not warrant. If the relation of the local church to all the churches was properly understood, there would be, not only more harmony among us, but more *money* in the treasuries of our National organizations. It is our conviction that the local church bears a very close relation to the churches, and that this relation is very imperfectly understood.

It is true, the local church has its own work to do, in its own field. Instruction in righteousness and in doctrine, the teaching of the word, building up its own members in our most holy faith, supporting the Sunday-school and other organizations, taking care of the weak, comforting the sick, ministering to the poor—this is plainly the work of the local church, and nothing should be allowed to interfere

with it. But there are other duties besides these for the performance of which the local church is responsible.

The local church is a part of the kingdom of God, bearing an important relation to the community in which it exists, to the country and to all humanity. This the local church too often forgets and lives only for itself, instead of living for the kingdom, as each individual member should do. The spirit of selfishness too frequently is the ruling spirit in the local church. How may we advance our own interests, fill our own pews, sustain our societies, all of which are proper questions, but should not exclude questions equally proper and important: How may we fill our obligations to the brotherhood of humanity of which we are a part? How may we discharge our duty to the missionary cause, to the various national organizations, and agencies for the spread of the Gospel? These are vital questions for the consideration of every local church, and the church that ignores them, fails in the mission for which it was organized.

Let us examine more closely into this matter. St. Paul beautifully works out this thought in I Cor. 12: 14-23. Speaking of the relation of one member of the church to another, he compares it to the relation of one member of the body to another. The hand, the foot, the eye and the ear, are so closely related, that when one suffers, they all suffer. Neither can the foot say to the hand, I have no need of thee, nor because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, and so on. The relation of the local church to the churches, should be the same as the relation of one member of the church to the other members. When one member of the body suffers, others suffer with it; when one member of the church suffers, others will suffer also; and when a local church suffers wrong and persecution, all the churches suffer with it. Suppose a local church over in Indiana is scattered by reason of a powerful enemy, completely demoralized, shall not all the churches in the brotherhood feel the shock?

If this relation of the local church to the churches, were properly understood and appreciated, it would solve many problems for us, and enable us more fully to discharge our obligations to the world at large. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel," is a command addressed to the churches at large but no less to each local church, and each such church becomes responsible for the dis-